

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Sir:

In response to the Office Action of March 31, 2005, please amend the claims of the above-identified application as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste comprising the steps of:

- a) preparing an enzymatic digest medium and adjusting a pH level of said enzymatic digest medium to pH between about 4 and about 6 ~~an optimal level~~;
- b) grinding protein waste and mixing said waste with said enzymatic digest medium to produce a protein solubles mixture comprising protein, fat, and water;
- c) maintaining said protein solubles mixture at a temperature optimal for enzymatic digestion;
- d) periodically recirculating said protein solubles mixture to insure complete enzymatic digestion;
- e) emulsifying said protein solubles mixture to disperse said protein, said fat, and said water to produce emulsified proteins;
- f) allowing separation of said water into a water layer, removing said water layer, and recycling said water layer in preparing said enzymatic digest;
- g) mixing said emulsified proteins with a carrier;
- h) extruding said doughlike mixture into a plurality of pellet-like pieces;
- i) evenly drying said plurality of pellet-like pieces;

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j) sizing said plurality of pellet-like pieces to uniform size and retaining said uniformly sized pellet-like pieces.

2. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of preparing an enzymatic digest medium comprises mixing at least one enzyme, an inedible egg substance, and at least one preservative.

3. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 2, wherein adjusting said pH level comprising adding phosphoric acid or lactic acid ~~and said optimal level is between about pH 4 and pH 6.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein said enzymatic digest medium comprises about 2 pounds per ton of at least one preservative, about one and one half pounds per ton of at least one enzyme wherein said at least one enzyme comprises protease and keritinase, and about one thousand nine hundred ninety six pounds per ton of inedible egg substance ~~and said optimal level of pH is between about 4 and 6.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of mixing said protein waste with said enzymatic digest medium comprises recirculating said protein solubles mixture through a chopper pump to insure adequate grinding and thorough mixing with said enzymatic digest medium.

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6. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of maintaining said protein solubles mixture at an optimal temperature is carried out by a heating element placed in a housing filled with water and surrounding a digester tank containing said protein solubles mixture and said optimal temperature is between about 90 degrees and 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

7. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein said carrier further comprises ground wheat midds, ground corn midds, or soybean meal.

8. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of evenly drying said plurality of pellet-like pieces comprises subjecting said pellet-like pieces to at least one heat zone, at least one cool zone, and alternating airflow.

9. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of sizing said plurality of pellet-like pieces is carried out by moving said pieces through a roller mill for uniform sizing and then using a vibrating screen to retain only said pellet-like pieces of uniform size.

10. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of preparing an enzymatic digest medium comprises mixing at least one enzyme, an inedible egg substance, and at least one preservative and adjusting

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said pH level to between about 4 and 6 by adding phosphoric acid; the step of grinding and mixing said protein waste and said enzymatic digest medium is carried out by a grinder and recirculation through a chopper pump; and the step of maintaining said protein solubles mixture at an optimal temperature ~~includes~~ comprises using a heating element to provide heat ~~such that said optimal temperature is~~ required to maintain temperature between about 90 degrees and 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

11. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 10, wherein the step of drying said plurality of pellet-like pieces comprises heating said pellet-like pieces, cooling said pellet-like pieces, and providing alternating air flow to said pellet-like pieces.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 2, wherein said at least one enzyme comprises protease and keritinase and wherein said acidic solution comprises phosphoric acid or lactic acid.

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18. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of evenly drying further comprises providing air flow to said pellet-like pieces.

19. (Currently Amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of periodically recirculating said protein solubles mixture comprises recirculation for one hour every twelve hours for three to four days.

20. (currently amended) The process for ~~naturally~~ recycling protein waste as claimed in claim 1, wherein said carrier comprises a high surface area to volume ratio which absorbs moisture from said emulsified proteins and produces a doughlike mixture